This course is designed to introduce students to examples from the variety of philosophies, practices, stories, institutions and objects that comprise “religion” around the globe. Though we will pursue no universal “theories,” the course will focus on the way that various cultures express the experience of excess, more than, and other than through the idiom of spirits and even “The Spirit” and how these shape cultural practices and values. Examining traditions across history and from a variety of global regions, the course will use film, music, lectures, and readings paired with in-class and online discussions. By the end of the course, students will be able to write and speak critically about the idea of “religion,” and demonstrate familiarity with several theoretical approaches to the study of religion as well as with several religious traditions from around the world.